

THE 2004 STATE OF THE UNION: What Bush Won't Say

Tonight President Bush gives his third State of the Union address to Congress and the American people. In last year's address, Bush made several claims that were either demonstrably false at the time, or proven to be misleading as the year went on. Will Bush use his 2004 address to apologize for last year's misstatements?

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: "Our First Goal" Is Creating Jobs**

"Our first goal is clear: We must have an economy that grows fast enough to employ every man and woman who seeks a job."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

➔ **2004—What Bush Won't Say: His Economy Shed 3 Million Private Jobs**

Three Million Jobs Lost, Unemployment Skyrocketed Since Bush Took Office. The national unemployment rate in December 2003 was 5.7 percent, up from 4.1 percent when Bush took office in January 2001 and a 39 percent increase. Nationally, the economy has lost nearly 3 million private sector jobs under Bush. According to new Labor Department statistics, a recent .2% drop in unemployment is attributed to the 300,000 American workers who quit looking for work in December 2003 and "dropped out of the pool of available workers." [Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov>; AP, 1/9/04]

Economy Not Growing Fast Enough. For Bush to make up for all the jobs lost on his watch, the economy needs to grow over 270,000 jobs a month by November 2004. The growth in jobs touted by the Bush Administration has simply failed to materialize. Payrolls rose a listless 1,000 jobs in December 2003, far short of the anticipated 130,000. The November 2003 job creation numbers were revised further downward to 43,000 from the initial prediction of 57,000—both far short of the 150,000 that had been predicted by economists. Of course this is 568,000 jobs short of the 612,000 jobs that the Council of Economic Advisers predicted would be created over the past two months by the Bush tax cuts.

[www.bls.gov; Reuters, 1/9/04; Associated Press, 12/9/03; www.jobwatch.org]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: We Will Not Leave Our Problems For The Future.**

"We will not deny, we will not ignore, we will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, to other presidents and other generations."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

"The best way to address the deficit and move toward a balanced budget is to encourage economic growth and to show some spending discipline in Washington, D.C."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

➔ **2004—What Bush Won't Say: Bush Leaves "Future Generations" Massive Financial Burden**

Bush Policies Create Future Debt. George Bush's tax and spending policies have lead to a \$3.8 trillion explosion of the national debt between 2001 and 2006. Over this time period, the average middle class taxpayer will shoulder a net increase of \$21,068 in their debt burden. The debt burden dwarfs the \$632 a

year in tax cuts that the average middle-income family will receive: 6.6 times bigger than their tax cuts. After the first six years, the fiscal situation deteriorates further. A recent report from the Congressional Budget Office indicates that under Bush's policies the U.S. is on track to triple the national debt, including the amount owed to Social Security, by 2013. That's \$10 trillion in additional debt piled on us and our children, which will impose huge debt interest payments every year for the foreseeable future. [Citizens for Tax Justice, 9/23/03; Congressional Budget Office, "The Budget and Economic Outlook: An Update," 8/03]

- **Realistic Projections Show That the Deficit Dramatically Increases After 2008.** The Bush Administration claims to cut the deficit in half in five years (2008). Although the deficit temporarily declines by 2008, it will skyrocket afterward. An analysis by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities [CBPP] shows the deficit rising from \$401 billion in 2003 and above \$500 billion in 2004. The deficit declines to approximately \$460 billion in 2008. After 2008, however, the deficit will increase further to approximately \$650 billion in 2013. In August 2003, the CBO projected deficits "as far as the eye can see." [CBPP, 9/16/03; Los Angeles Times, 8/29/03]
- **Bush Deficit Reduction Plan Fails To Account For His Own Spending Proposals.** President Bush's 2005 budget will propose cutting the deficit by half over the next five years. But, Bush's plan adds up only by excluding future costs his administration plans to incur. The Bush plan to cut our deficit fails to account for:
- ▶▶ **Pentagon Buildup.** Bush's last budget did not include 10-year costs for the planned build-up initiatives by the Pentagon. CBPP predicts that Bush's new deficit reduction plan will likewise exclude the cost of such initiatives.
 - ▶▶ **War on Terrorism.** Bush's last budget completely ignored the cost of fighting worldwide terror beyond last September. CBPP predicts Bush's new budget will do the same thing, despite long-term plans to continue American anti-terror endeavors.
 - ▶▶ **Relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax.** The Bush administration has said it plans to fix defects in the Alternative Minimum Tax system, which was originally set up to ensure that wealthy Americans could not completely avoid their taxes through investment schemes. Bush's 2005 budget will ignore nearly \$70 billion in costs associated with fixing the AMT by 2009.
 - ▶▶ **"Tax extenders."** Bush's new budget will not account for predictions that so-called "temporary" tax breaks will be extended into the future—at a cost of \$10 billion by 2009. [CBPP, 1/16/04]
 - ▶▶ **Other Uncertainties: The True Cost Of Prescription Plan; Debt Servicing; Iraq Reconstruction:** Congressional Budget Office Director Douglas Holtz-Eakin has estimated that the cost of the new prescription drug benefit will cost more than \$1 trillion in the second decade and could rise to \$2 trillion if Congress fills in the coverage gap. John Goodman, President of the National Center for Policy Analysis estimated the total cost of the bill to be "on the order of \$12 trillion." The administration also plans to request another \$50 billion for spending in Iraq, but that request will not be made until after the 2004 election. [Washington Times, 12/8/03; Defense News, 1/19/04]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: Medicare Reform Will Help Seniors.**

"Health care reform must begin with Medicare; Medicare is the binding commitment of a caring society. We must renew that commitment by giving seniors access to the preventive medicine and new drugs that are transforming health care in America. Seniors happy with the current Medicare system should be able to keep their coverage just the way it is."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

→ **2004—What Bush Won't Say: Seniors Worse Off Under GOP Medicare Changes.**

Seniors Lose, Corporations Gain Under Bush Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. According to Consumers Union, American seniors will face higher out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs in 2007 when coverage is fully implemented than they currently pay without the coverage. The Wall Street Journal describes the law as a "big win" for the drug and health insurance industry for blocking drug re-importation from Canada and providing billions in subsidies for private corporations. [Consumers Union Action Alert, www.consumersunion.org; Wall Street Journal, 11/17/03]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: Help Low-Income Americans With Health Care Costs .**

"...we must work toward a system in which all Americans have a good insurance policy, choose their own doctors, and seniors and low-income Americans receive the help they need."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

→ **2004—What Bush Won't Say: Low-Income Seniors Lose Out Under New Medicare Plan.**

Low Income Seniors Lose Under Bush Medicare Plan. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, nearly six million low-income seniors will have worse coverage under the legislation than they currently receive through Medicaid. [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 11/21/03]

→ **Bush Has Not Dealt With The Soaring Cost Of Health Care.** President Bush has no plan to deal with runaway health care costs that "soared at double-digit rates in 2002 for the third straight year" and are considered the primary cause for the lack of insurance today. The average cost of employer-based health care costs increased \$1,100 (14 percent) to \$9,068 last year. Americans spent \$1.6 trillion on health care in 2002—a 9.3 percent increase. "Affordability remains the number one reason people lack health coverage today," said Dr. Donald Young, president of the Health Insurance Association of America. [Los Angeles Times, 9/30/03, Wall Street Journal, 1/9/04]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: Our Environment Must Be Protected.**

"I have sent you a comprehensive energy plan to promote energy efficiency and conservation, to develop cleaner technology, and to produce more energy at home. I have sent you clear skies legislation that mandates a 70 percent cut in air pollution from power plants over the next 15 years. I have sent you a healthy forest initiative to help prevent the catastrophic fires that devastate communities, kill wildlife and burn away millions of acres of treasured forests. I urge you to pass these measures for the good of both our environment and our economy."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

→ **2004—What Bush Won't Say: Bush Cut EPA Funding, Proposed Harmful Environmental Initiatives.**

Bush Shortchanged EPA Budget. President Bush's 2004 budget proposed a \$7.6 billion budget for the Environmental Protection Agency--\$627 million (7.6 percent) below that what was required to maintain 2003 purchasing power, and \$452 million (5.6 percent) below enacted levels for 2003. [House Budget Committee Minority Staff, 4/30/03]

"Clear Skies" Would Delay Clean Air Regulations; Fail to Reduce Carbon Dioxide. The Administration's Clear Skies initiative would provide less environmental protection than the current Clean Air Act. The Bush plan delays deadlines for meeting public health standards, allowing violations of soot and smog health standards to continue until 2015 or later. The Bush plan allows more than twice as much Sulfur Dioxide for nearly a decade longer than the Clean Air Act currently allows. The "Clear Skies" plan also allows more than one and a half times as much Nitrogen Oxide for nearly a decade longer. The Clear Skies plan would also fail to reduce carbon dioxide - the main global warming pollutant. [National Resources Defense Council; www.nrdc.org; Environment 2004, www.environment2004.org; [New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com), 1/31/03]

Bush Plan Would Allow Timber Companies Greater Access to Log Forests. On August 22, 2002, Bush proposed a policy for our national forests which would make it easier for timber companies to log and remove trees and brush from 190 million acres of the most "fire-prone forests" across the country. Bush asked the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior and his Council on Environmental Quality to authorize thinning projects on an emergency basis, as well as to find ways of rushing through environmental assessments. According to the [Associated Press](http://www.associatedpress.com), Bush "also asked Congress to pass legislation 'that will ensure that vital forest restoration projects are not tied up in courts.'" [[Associated Press](http://www.associatedpress.com), 8/22/02]

Bush Proposed Loosening Regulations on Mercury Pollution. A proposed rule change by the Bush EPA would remove mercury emissions from Clean Air Act regulations that have been used to limit the most toxic air pollutants. Instead, mercury emissions would fall under less stringent Clean Air Act regulations governing less toxic pollutants that cause acid rain and smog. Part of the proposed change would be rescinding a December 2000 EPA ruling which concluded that mercury emissions are a public health menace and required power plants to install equipment to achieve the maximum amount of emission reduction. [[New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com), 12/3/03; [Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com), 12/3/03; 12/5/03; [Houston Chronicle](http://www.houstonchronicle.com), 12/5/03; [Associated Press](http://www.associatedpress.com), 12/15/03]

→ **Days After Bush Cut Mercury Restrictions, FDA and EPA Draft Plan To Warn Pregnant Women Of Tuna Consumption.** A draft advisory from the Food & Drug Administration and EPA cautioned adults to limit their intake of fish and shellfish to 12 ounces a week because of potentially high levels of mercury, just days after the Bush Administration announced a loosening of mercury regulations. Studies have found that mercury can damage the brains and nervous systems of fetuses and young children. Exposure to it from eating contaminated fish can lead to a number of neurological problems, including learning and attention disabilities and mental retardation. [[Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com), 12/11/03; [Chicago Tribune](http://www.chicagotribune.com), 12/11/03; Food & Drug Administration Advisory, www.fda.gov; EPA Fish Consumption Advisory, www.epa.gov]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: Time To “Turn The Tide” In The Fight Against AIDS.**

“I ask the Congress to commit \$15 billion over the next five years, including nearly \$10 billion in new money, to turn the tide against AIDS in the most afflicted nations of Africa and the Caribbean.”

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

→ **2004—What Bush Won’t Say: White House Budget Request Fell Far Short Of Bush’s Promise.**

Despite Rhetoric, Bush Budget Called for Reduction in Foreign Aid to Fight HIV/AIDS in Africa. During his 2003 visit to Africa, President Bush promised increased foreign aid for Africa's fight against AIDS and poverty; however his budget actually reduced US aid to Africa. After announcing a 5-year \$15 billion initiative designed to fight HIV and AIDS in Africa, the White House's budget requested only \$2 billion for the program's inaugural year in 2004 -- \$1 billion less than promised. [[National Newspaper Publishers Association](#), 7/17/03; [Saint Paul Pioneer Press](#), 11/30/03; [San Francisco Chronicle](#), 1/14/04]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: We’re Winning The War On Terror.**

“The war goes on, and we are winning. To date we have arrested or otherwise dealt with many key commanders of Al Qaida... We've got the terrorists on the run. We're keeping them on the run. One by one the terrorists are learning the meaning of American justice.”

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

→ **2004—What Bush Won’t Say: His Own Defense Secretary Questioned Success Fighting Terror.**

Rumsfeld Said It’s Unclear If We’re Winning The War On Terror In an internal memo obtained by [USA Today](#), Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld contradicted many of the Bush’s public comments on Iraq:

→ **Rumsfeld:** “We are having mixed results with Al Qaida,” [[USA Today](#), 10/22/03]

→ **Rumsfeld:** “Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror.” [[USA Today](#), 10/22/03]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: He's Protecting The Homeland.**

"This government is taking unprecedented measures to protect our people and defend our homeland. We've intensified security at the borders and ports of entry, posted more than 50,000 newly trained federal screeners in airports, begun inoculating troops and first responders against smallpox, and are deploying the nation's first early warning network of sensors to detect biological attack."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

➔ **2004—What Bush Won't Say: Crucial Homeland Security Needs Remain Unmet.**

Less Than 10 Percent of the Nation's Border Agents Secure the Northern Border. Only 1,000 border agents patrol the United State's border with Canada, compared to 9,500 that patrol the nation's southern border. While the US-Mexico border is 2,000 miles long, the US-Canada border is 5,000 miles, meaning that only one agent patrols for every 5 miles of border. [[Deseret Morning News](#) (Salt Lake City), 7/20/03]

Bush Fired Thousands Of Airport Screeners. The initial federal air security screening force of over 55,000 has been cut by thousands after being attacked by the GOP. Chairman of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on the Appropriations Committee, Rep. Harold Rogers, criticized the number of airport screeners, saying, "TSA threw money at the employee and screening deadlines in a shotgun fashion and over-hired..." TSA reports that its force will number "only 48,000 screeners by the end of 2004," and the GOP-controlled House Appropriations Committee has required TSA to cut the force even more, to 45,000 screeners. Once completed, the total cuts to the force will amount to a more than 22 percent reduction in screeners. [HR 2555, 2003; Transportation Security Administration, www.tsa.gov; AP, 4/30/03; Washington Post, 5/1/03]

Smallpox Vaccination Plan "Ceased" Without Support from Science, Workers, or the Public.

Bush's plan for vaccinating first responders for smallpox died after having failed to garner the expected number of volunteers and being criticized for not taking into account possible health problems and workers' concerns. The vaccine would have been supposed to cover 500,000 health care worker volunteers in phase I and 10 million first responders in phase II, but as of October 2003 only 38,549 had been vaccinated. A CDC official characterized the plan in October 2003 as "ceased." Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson had speculated 500,000 volunteers would be vaccinated within 30 days of December 2002 program announcement, but in actuality only 4,200 vaccinations had occurred at that point. [[New York Times](#), 1/30/03, 3/7/03; [Washington Post](#), 2/24/03; [Associated Press](#), 4/2/03; USA Today, 10/16/03]

Terrorism Panel Found Lack of Momentum On Homeland Security. The Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction, led by former Republican Party chairman James Gilmore, was tasked with assessing America's domestic terrorism preparedness. In its final report, released in December 2003, the commission expressed its fear of that the US is becoming more complacent as time passes, stating, "the panel is concerned that the momentum, which accelerated full force following the September 11 attacks, may have been interrupted." The panel also noted, "Despite an encouraging start, the momentum appears to have waned as people, businesses, and governments react to the uncertainties in combating terrorism..." [Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction, *Forging America's New Normalcy*, 12/15/03]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: Iraq Had Specific Weapons Capabilities**

"The United Nations concluded in 1999 that Saddam Hussein had biological weapons materials sufficient to produce over 25,000 liters of anthrax; enough doses to kill several million people. He hasn't accounted for that material. He has given no evidence that he has destroyed it. The United Nations concluded that Saddam Hussein had materials sufficient to produce more than 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin...Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent...U.S. intelligence indicates that Saddam Hussein had upwards of 30,000 munitions capable of delivering chemical agents. Inspectors recently turned up 16 of them, despite Iraq's recent declaration denying their existence...From three Iraqi defectors we know that Iraq, in the late 1990s, had several mobile biological weapons labs. These are designed to produce germ warfare agents and can be moved from place to a place to evade inspectors."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address, emphasis added

→ **2004—What Bush Won't Say: One Year Later, No Weapons Have Been Found**

Investigators Say No Weapons Have Been Found In Iraq. More than ten months after the war began, investigators scouring Iraq "have found no support for the two main fears expressed in London and Washington before the war: that Iraq had a hidden arsenal of old weapons and built advanced programs for new ones. In public statements and unauthorized interviews, investigators said they have discovered no work on former germ-warfare agents such as anthrax bacteria, and no work on a new designer pathogen -- combining pox virus and snake venom -- that led U.S. scientists on a highly classified hunt for several months. The investigators assess that Iraq did not, as charged in London and Washington, resume production of its most lethal nerve agent, VX, or learn to make it last longer in storage."

[Washington Post, 1/7/04, emphasis added]

☒ **2003—What Bush Said: Iraq Sought Uranium In Africa**

"The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

--President Bush, 2003 State of the Union Address

→ **2004—What Bush Won't Say: Administration Was Warned For A Year That Uranium Evidence Had Been Debunked**

White House Repeatedly Warned Not To Cite Niger Report. In March 2002, both the CIA and State Department learned that evidence linking Iraq to Niger was unfounded. In October, CIA Director Tenet personally intervened with Condoleezza Rice's deputy National Security Advisor to have the charge removed from Bush's speech to the nation. Rice herself was sent a memo debunking the claim. In January, just days before Bush uttered the false charge CIA officials tried again to remove the language, but the White House insisted it remain—with added the caveat that they had received the information from British sources. [Bush State of the Union, 1/28/03; Time, 7/21/03 Issue; Hadley/Bartlett Gaggle, 7/22/03; New York Times, 7/13/03; Washington Post, 7/20/03; NPR, 6/19/03]

Senior Bush Officials Leaked Identity Of Undercover CIA Agent Whose Husband Had Exposed Bush State Of The Union Lie. In July 2003, Ambassador Joseph Wilson publicly disclosed that he had investigated and debunked intelligence linking Iraqi nuclear ambitions to the African nation of Niger. Wilson's investigation concluded in March 2002, nearly a year before Bush made the assertion that Iraq sought uranium in Africa during his 2003 State of the Union. Days after Wilson went public, columnist Robert Novak revealed that his wife was a CIA operative. The Washington Post reported that "a senior administration official said that before Novak's column ran, two top White House officials called at least six Washington journalists and disclosed the identity and occupation of Wilson's wife." [Washington Post, 9/28/03]

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